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**Featured Athlete/Coach Archives**

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**AT Feature:  
Monte Vista Girls Water Polo -- Part 1**

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Story and Photos by Olivia Johnson

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*Head Coach **Todd Halvorson***

Picture a group of girls who put their team first and their individuality second. Picture a group of girls who are within site of their season goal, but understand that instead of focusing on their successes, they need to focus only on their next challenge. Imagine that same group of girls embracing fun because they know that is one of the keys to accessing their highest potential. Those girls, in a nutshell, are the Monte Vista varsity girls water polo team, coached by **Todd Halvorson** and **Scott Getty**.

Starting this Saturday, head coach Halvorson's undefeated team (in

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### Previous Featured Articles for 2004

league) will be pitted against some of the best teams in Northern California when they show their stuff at the North Coast Sections tournament. Halverson, who has been with the team for 10 seasons, has always maintained the desire of giving each of his players the opportunity to compete in a championship game--and he has yet to be disappointed. By building a solid fundamental foundation, shaping practices around upcoming games, and by keeping things light-hearted, he and his team have been able to stay within the running of an NCS title.

AquaticTimes.com was recently able to speak with Halverson and get the low-down on the "behind-the-scenes" of his team and what it takes to gather girls of different backgrounds and merge them into a thriving line-up.



***Katherine Stanton (senior)***

**AT:** As the leading team in your league, has it been tough trying to maintain the winning edge?

**Halverson:** Our focus for the team is to be as prepared as possible for each and every game we play. While we look long-term, we never try and lose sight of the next game at hand. Right now, our focus isn't on how many wins or losses we have or what place we are in league, or maintaining the winning edge, but on our next game.

**AT:** What has been your team's biggest challenge this year?

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[Olympic Diver Kimiko Soldati-Part 1](#)  
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**Halverson:** One of our challenges this year has been bringing players, who play for different club teams in the off-season, together as one high school team. Each player brings their own individual talents, and together we incorporate those skills to become a better team. We are also a relatively young team, and building confidence in those players so that they are able and ready to compete at the varsity level has been rewarding.



**Haley Andersen** (white cap, senior)  
& **Teresa Steffens** (black cap, sophomore)



Coaches-Walnut Creek Championships  
 AT Features REC Assistant Coaches  
 Gehringer Gators Coaching Staff  
 Kelly McCabe-Diablo Valley College  
 Katy Erhardt-Diablo Valley College  
 Blake Henderson  
 Sean Peneyra-Vista Diablo  
 Sam Craven-Vista Diablo  
 Jocelyn Chang  
 Ryan Wall  
 Dewing Park 8&un Girls  
 Jimmy Bailey-Diablo Valley College  
 Blake Henderson  
 Chelsea Allard  
 Suzanne Heim-Bowen  
 Dave Boatwright  
 Kate Dwelley  
 Lauren Rogers

**Katherine Stanton** (black cap)  
 & **Emily Malin** (white cap, freshman)

**AT:** To what do you attribute your success?

**Halverson:** I attribute our success to the fact that all of the girls on the team challenge and support each other at every practice and game to become better. For our program to have success, we must play excellent "team" water polo. Team chemistry and cohesiveness are very important. The players put the team first and their individuality second. Everyone feels confident in their ability to play, and feels that their teammates are confident in them. I think we win the close games and upset teams because we play well as a team.

**AT:** Which game was the toughest you have had so far?

**Halverson:** I think our toughest game (has not been) against one particular team, but (has been) in the tournaments we play in. During the season, we are invited to two of the top tournaments in the area. We play two to three games in one day with, sometimes, very little rest between games. These games are against some of the top teams within Northern California. We have been fortunate that this year we have had positive outcomes, which help us in the overall development of the team and each of our players.



**Teresa Steffens** (black cap, sophomore)  
 & **Haley Andersen** (white cap, senior)



**Scott Getty** (Assistant Coach)

**AT:** How has your success influenced your team?

**Halverson:** It is our players that have really influenced the success and drive of this team. We don't talk about each individual win or our overall successes, we take each game as it comes and prepare accordingly. Each game, to us, is the same--just another challenge to overcome. We prepare, train and play hard while having fun.

**AT:** What have your goals been this year?

**Halverson:** One of our goals this year is, for each girl to play to the best of their ability in each and every game they play in. Our practices are shaped around the games we have coming up and what is going to bring us success. As a player on the Monte Vista Women's Water Polo team, our coaching staff expects a high level of commitment, professionalism and sportsmanship. Our goal is to build a solid fundamental foundation from which players can move successfully to higher levels in the sport. I believe that by having a team-oriented focus, it leads to a successful environment where people learn, grow and have fun. Over the past 10 seasons I have been coaching at Monte Vista, every player has had an opportunity

to compete in a championship game, whether at a tournament, league or sectional-level, and our goal is to continue to give each player that same opportunity every year.

### Interview Continued in Part 2



*Kelly Mendoza (black cap, freshman)  
& Abby Wolf (white cap, senior)*



*Going for the ball.*

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Is your team not being covered in AT??? Do you have a swimmer(s)/coach that you would like to be featured in AT? Then

give us a call at 60 WATER.

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